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all that remains

by [fleetingblossom](#)

Summary

You are Lucina, and you are born with the weight of time rested on your shoulders, a blade that is not your own, and a decision you've unraveled time to make. A person to end. A person to save.

“You deserved better from me than one sword and a world of troubles.”

You are Lucina, the exalt of the halidom of Ylisse. When you are born, you are born fighting. There will be no silver spoon tucked under your tongue, and your legacy precedes you, your father's name on everyone's lips.

The memories you have of father flicker until you can't distinguish between what is story and what is truth, until he becomes more like the hero-king and less like the person you remember, blue eyes and dark hair and soft smile.

When he dies, he leaves you with the weight of the Falchion familiar in your palm and shoes too large for you to fill. Every “You look so much like your father,” stabs you in the gut, and at night you curl up with his sword (Falchion will never be yours, always his, his fingerprints on the hilt) and dream of what he would have done and what you will do.

How he would have saved his country, and how you will save yours. Life is teetering on eggshells and sword fighting lessons. From the moment you are old enough to walk, you toddle around with a wooden facsimile of Falchion, and the furniture in your nursery is battered with battle scars.

There is no time for silk dresses embroidered with gold, and you are a far cry from the graceful

Lady Emmeryn, who has become as much of a story as your father has. You are a warrior queen, and your armor becomes so much of a second skin that you feel bare without it.

Your people are dying, and you are fighting to catch up to the echoes of your father, wondering, always wondering, if you look so much like him, then would you have made the right decision, done the right things. If you could save him, given the chance, and your mind is filled not with strategies and sword techniques, but the all consuming idea that you can, you can and you will change the future, to one where it is your father who teaches you how to wield his Falchion, not the steady hand of Frederick who watches with kind eyes.

“How did I do?” Frederick isn’t very good at hiding his emotions, and he looks away briefly before placing his hand on your head, his smile kind. You will never know how much you remind him of your father--but you were always more his daughter than your mother’s.

“You were perfect, milady.” And you will learn how to better hide your own heart with time, but right now, you turn to him and beam, wiping the sweat from your brow.

Pulling away from Frederick’s warm hand, you look up at him, wondering, wondering so much that you could have spent a lifetime of wondering, if father would have looked at you with the same kind eyes--and knowing from the stories you hear of him and the memory of his soft smile that you would do anything to see the moment that he does. The mask that Gerome gave you sits on your nightstand, and when it comes time, you tie your hair up and throw away your name, no longer Lucina, the exalt of the halidom of Ylisse.

You close your eyes and step through the portal, waking up to chaos, leaping between a much younger Aunt Lissa and one of those things, fangs bared, claws out.

When you look at him, truly look at him, Chrom, Prince of Ylisse, so much younger yet still every bit of what your memory salvages of him, it takes every fiber of your being, when your body sings electric, the tears welling in your eyes (and you thank Gerome again for the mask), to prevent yourself from calling him father, to leap into his arms and cry.

You *do* look like him--the resemblance is startling, down to the exact shade of his eyes--but what makes your heart stop is the woman that stands apart from the rest, her fingers clutching a tome, her eyes the picture of concern.

Mother.

“Whenever I think of your little girl, I can't help but feel...jealous. I know it's ridiculous to envy myself, but I can't help it. ”

Growing up, Aunt Lissa is your second mother, though she might as well have been your mother, because you can’t remember anything about yours. Her face seems to be an amalgamation of other people, of other shepherds, Olivia and Maribelle and Sully and Sumia, puzzle pieces that refuse to fit together in the haze of your memories. For years, you ask if you looked like her, if she was beautiful as she was kind, but they only tell you that you are your father’s daughter and that she was brave and brilliant, that she and father were like two sides to the same coin. Then why, why, you ask yourself, don’t you remember anything about her?

You are not left with a single sliver of a memory, not the faintest idea of how her voice sounded like, what kind of person beyond brave and brilliant she was. They do not tell stories about your mother and she doesn’t seem real to you, as though you had no mother at all. She is a pendant with her profile in the cameo, her likeness not found when you stare into the mirror long and hard, wondering if you have her jaw line or her high cheekbones.

She is an empty casket buried six feet under, and the harder you think about her, the less likely it seems that a woman like her could have ever existed. Mother is a stranger as much as Aunt Lissa is a comfort, but when Aunt Lissa brushes your hair ("It's the same shade as Chrom's," she mumbles, her eyes shining with tears), all you are reminded of is what she is not. You can't help the ache to your bones when you see the way that she looks at Owain, her expression so tender you can't help but wonder if your mother ever looked at you like that, too.

If she had once brushed calloused fingers through your hair and whispered your name the same way that Aunt Lissa whispered Owain's, one last time before she went to war and never came home. If she thought about you all those months apart, before she died, when she left you behind boxed up in the safe walls of the castle. When you see her, her eyes as bright as stars, you can only imagine.

You suppress the smile more like a sob as you watch her, flesh and blood instead of made of ink and words, her tactician's robe sweeping up dust as she walks, her tome in her arms.

Clutching the paper package to your chest, you move to walk forward with the dress you bought, but you stop short just as father arrives at her side, a lump caught in your throat. When she thinks no one is watching, she takes a step closer to father, and you watch with the sort of awe found only in very small children as she places a hand on his arm.

They are rarely found without one another on the battlefield, but something about the normalcy of this scene makes your heart pound in your chest at the realization that your parents are so incredibly in love with each other. Hugging the package to you a little tighter, you decide that this can wait another day--this scene is enough for you to drink it in, and you didn't know that you hungered for this sort of thing, the sense of family that you felt had been robbed from you.

Without a word, you turn, the paper package crackling noisily as you walk quicker, and as soon as the warmth in your chest had come, you remember once again that they are not your parents.

Your parents are dead, buried empty caskets because they never found their bodies.

While everyone else has their mother's wedding ring, you don't even have that--it sparkles on her ring finger, and you swallow hard. This truth is bitter in your mouth, but it is truth nonetheless. You blink away the tears; there is no use in crying, when there's still time left, when, for now, they can be yours.

"So let me protect you. It's the least your brother can do!"

You envy Morgan. You try not to, because that is hardly the proper thing to do, to envy your own brother, when in your future, he doesn't even have the privilege to be born. Your parents are dead long before that. But you do envy him, the twisted little beast with a gaping maw settling deep inside your chest--where he came from, his family is not broken like shards of a mirror.

He remembers little of it, but you are sure that, if he went treasure hunting with mother he learned how to wield a blade from father. He knew what it was like when mother kissed his forehead after a nightmare, or when father promised that he would tuck him in for the night. His imagined past is all that you've ever wanted for yourself, and you can't look at your brother in the eyes for a very long time.

His mark of the exalt mirrors yours, on the right instead of the left, but when he speaks, his face lights up in a way that you don't think yours has ever had. Morgan knows no monsters lurking in the dark, and you envy that sort of untainted naiveté. That's it, you think. He is so pure, so

untainted by the future that is not his, and you want to protect that, protect him, the baby brother you never had.

“Morgan, be a little more careful out there.” He flinches just a little as you wrap up the cut on his arm, your touch far from delicate--delicacy isn't exactly a learned skill, when sword and blood is all you know.

“Ow, ow, ow, can you at least be more gentle? Sheesh, Lucina.”

You try not to smile, but you do, the laughter in your voice as you reply, “I shall do my best, brother.”

Maybe this, though, even more than that imaginary future he's from, is enough.

“...My life is yours. It always has been.”

“Mother?” You pull her aside, picking at the tips of your fingers, and she notices your uncharacteristic nervousness, and touches her fingers to the back of your hand, bringing it close so that she could hold it.

“What is it, Lucina?” Her smile is and bright that you have to look away, averting your eyes, as though she could burn you. Her gloved palms are warm, and you stare at them, finding yourself unable to let go, your heart going so fast in your chest that you think it might stop.

You see the way she looks at father, the way her eyes soften with an expression of love that only a woman in love could have (though you know little about being in love--there is no time for frivolities like love, true love, the kind that changes fate, where you come from) and you don't want to believe your thoughts for one moment.

“Mother, I don't mean to pry but,” you manage to make yourself look at her, look at the face that is so unlike your own but so unnervingly familiar that she could not have been anyone but your mother, “could you tell me about you and father?”

Aunt Lissa has her stories and Frederick has his, when you were young and still swinging around a wooden practice sword. It was love at first sight, magnetic and forceful, and they fell in love like a hurricane blows through a city. How could they not have been anything but in love? You want to believe that, believe that they had been destined from the moment she grasped onto his hand in that field, and you have nothing else to believe but the hope that her love will triumph over the doubt clouding your heart.

“Well, he always said that...” She speaks, and like a man dying of thirst, you drink it all in, wishing, as though wishing hard enough could change truth into the fiction that you daydream about. But you, of all people, know that wishing changes nothing--from the moment you threw away your name, you had made a decision, one that you will make again.

Tomorrow, you decide.

She dies tomorrow.

“Yours will be a happy future.”

That night, you dream of the baby Lucina sleeping in her crib back in Ylisse, and the choice you must make. Must, for the sake of the father you had come from the ravages of time to save, even if it meant sacrificing the mother you had gotten to know once you arrived. Your fingers flex and

grip onto the hilt of Falchion--it is still not yours, the way you hold it in your hands a far cry from the effortlessness that father does--and you exhale, tossing in your bedroll.

At least, you console yourself, Morgan is a deep sleeper, and so he does not wake no matter how much noise you make. Tomorrow. It ends tomorrow, and once again, Lucina--you--will grow up not knowing how it feels to have her mother's calloused fingers run through her hair, left with only a pendant. But this time, hers will not be an empty coffin.

You fall asleep fighting--it had been so easy, once.

Save father.

Save Ylisse.

Change the fate of their world, for the one that you lost.

But you are not so sure now that you can do that.

Not anymore.

“When all else is lost, the future still remains.”

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